204.

FRIENDLY ADMONITIONS

TO THE

INHABITANTS

OF

GREAT-BRITAIN, in general, &c.

[Price ONE SHILLING.]

Price

BRITISH MUSEUM

FRIENDLY ADMONITIONS

TO THE

INHABITANTS

OF

GREAT-BRITAIN, in general;

AND TO THE

CLERGY of the CHURCH of ENGLAND, in particular.

By BRITANNICUS.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

Friendly Admonitions, &c.

Omnium ſocietatum nulla eſt gravior, nulla carior, quam ea, quæ cum republica eſt unicuique noſtrûm. Cari ſunt parentes, cari liberi, propinqui, familiares: ſed omnes omnium caritates patria una complexa eſt: pro qua quis bonus dubitet mortem oppetere, ſi ei ſit profuturus? CIC.

AT ſo important and alarming a criſis, it will not, I flatter myſelf, be deemed arrogant or preſumptuous in a private perſon to addreſs a few plain and ſerious admonitions to his countrymen; for, ſurely, if ever the ſituation of public affairs called for ſerious reflection from perſons of all ranks and degrees, the preſent does; and that man muſt be loſt to every noble, every manly ſentiment, dead to every generous feeling, and ſunk

to the utmoſt depravity of character, who in our preſent circumſtances, does not *feel* for his country. And yet, ſtrange as it may appear, it is obvious, tho' melancholy to obſerve, that people, in general, purſue their pleaſures with the ſame thoughtleſs gaiety as ever: they talk much, indeed, of public affairs, are very ready to blame the conduct of thoſe who are in ſtations of power and influence, and attribute our public miſcarriages to the cowardice and miſconduct of individuals, but ſeem little to conſider the real cauſes of our calamities;—that BRITAIN is brought to the brink of ruin by the degeneracy of her ſons, and that it muſt be extremely difficult, if not abſolutely impoſſible, for the ableſt heads, and the beſt hearts to ſave us from utter ruin, if our manners continue to be what they are at preſent. I would therefore do all in my power to impreſs my dear countrymen with a deep ſenſe of their calamitous ſituation; to awaken in them a ſpirit of genuine patriotiſm, an ardent concern for their country's honour; I would endeavour, and oh! that I were able, to perſuade them to relinquiſh that unmanly luxury, that ſelfiſh effeminacy, which is our reproach, and, if perſiſted in, will inevi-

tably be our deſtruction ; I would endeavour to kindle in their breaſts a noble ardour for liberty, for virtue, and religion ; to animate them to exert their utmoſt efforts for reviving a regard to principle, and for checking the alarming progreſs of vice and infidelity, that we may emerge from thoſe depths of infamy into which we are ſunk, and be once more a virtuous, and, of conſequence, a happy and flouriſhing people.

And, oh ! that I had the eloquence of a DEMOSTHENES, or a CICERO, of a PITT, or a MURRAY, that I might arreſt the attention of every *Briton*, that I might reach the inmoſt receſſes of every heart, that I might kindle the generous flame of patriotiſm, and fix the noble purpoſe of reformation in every breaſt. But I muſt content myſelf with delivering plain truths in plain language, without any of the ornaments of oratory or flowers of rhetoric ; and fortunately for me, the cauſe I plead ſtands in little need of adventitious ornaments ; if I am ſo happy as to obtain for it a fair and candid hearing, it will recommend itſelf, in the plaineſt dreſs, to every honeſt and conſiderate mind. I have no ſuch confidence in my own abilities, as to

imagine I am capable of planning ſchemes for diſtreſſing our enemies, or of pointing out the propereſt methods to be purſued by thoſe who are intruſted with the management of affairs in our preſent critical ſituation; what I aim at, is to awaken my countrymen to ſerious conſideration, and to revive that *public ſpirit*, which, unleſs it be in a few ſuperior minds, ſeems now to exiſt no more. Nor do I flatter myſelf with any conſiderable ſucceſs: there can be no harm, however, in the attempt, which tho' it ſhould be ridiculed by many, and diſregarded by all, I ſhall never repent of, as I ſhall always enjoy the ſatisfaction which ariſes from the conſciouſneſs of having meant well.

In the firſt place, therefore, I would earneſtly intreat every *Briton* to take an impartial view of the ſituation of his country, and of the character and manners of its inhabitants. We are engaged in a war with a powerful and ambitious nation, our avowed and inveterate enemy. This enemy is not only ſuperior to us in land armies, but greatly ſo in military ſkill. Their officers are trained up in ſchools at the public expence, where they undergo a laborious courſe of diſcipline, and expect to *riſe* only

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in proportion to their merit. They are animated beſides with a powerful and univerſal principle of *honour*, which inſpires, indeed, the meaneſt mechanic in *France*, and actuates the whole machine of government. The *French* have been long purſuing, and that with the utmoſt ſteddineſs and vigour, one grand plan of power; and notwithſtanding the various checks they have met with from time to time, have carried it to ſuch a height, as is ſufficient to alarm every nation in *Europe*. The progreſs too which they have made in *naval power* within theſe few years is very conſiderable; and ſhould they ſtill continue to make advances in it, the conſequences in regard to us are too obvious to be enumerated.

Such is the enemy we have to contend with; and what reaſon have we to hope for ſucceſs againſt them? Are we to look for victory from our fleets and armies, from the courage and conduct of our generals and admirals? Alas! our late experience ſhews us how little is to be expected from that quarter. Are we to truſt then to the virtue, the capacity, aud abilities of our nobility, and thoſe in the higher ranks of life, to the national ſpirit of union, or to that love

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of our country which animates the breaſt of every *Briton*? He muſt be little acquainted, indeed, with the national character, who forms any great expectations from theſe. That in the higher ſtations of life there are ſtill to be found perſons of diſtinguiſhed abilities, virtue, and integrity, I readily allow; for in the moſt degenerate times ſuch characters are to be met with in every country: but ſurely it may be affirmed, without the leaſt violation of truth, and without any exaggeration, that our nobility and people of faſhion are, in general, ſunk into the moſt unmanly luxury, and delirious with the rage of pleaſure. A ſelfiſh and an effeminate ſpirit have taken entire poſſeſſion of their hearts, and baniſhed every generous purpoſe, every manly ſentiment from their breaſts! That ſyſtem of political ſelf-intereſt, that is now eſtabliſhed upon ſuch firm foundations among us, prevents thoſe great and beneficial effects, which a national ſpirit of union would produce. The eager and unbounded purſuit of lucrative employments, the ſecuring a parliamentary intereſt, and the important concerns of dreſs and gaming, take up ſo much of the time and attention of the great, that they have none to ſpare for the

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weighty affairs of government, for the exalted and god-like cares of watching over and ſecuring the national welfare. So entirely, indeed, are they under the influence of ſelfiſh views, ſo totally loſt to the love of their country, that no public meaſures, however ſalutary, can be carried into execution, if they interfere with their private intereſt. Hence it is, that inſtead of an enlarged, fore-ſeeing, and ſteady policy, which comprehends every object, and attracts within the circle of its ſyſtem every poſſible event, we are obliged to have recourſe to temporary ſhifts, and the little expedients of a day.

Nor are ſelfiſhneſs and effeminacy confined to thoſe in the higher orders of life; they have in ſome meaſure diffuſed their malignant influence over all ranks and degrees of perſons amongſt us. Indeed this is not at all to be wondered at; it is natural for thoſe in inferior ſtations to copy after the manners of their ſuperiors; and if theſe are depraved, the whole maſs will ſoon become corrupt. A paſſion for pleaſure, dreſs, and expenſive amuſements, almoſt univerſally prevails; this paſſion has, in ſome degree, ſeized every condition of life, and we ſee thouſands ſeduced by it

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into a diſſolute and irregular courſe, fatal to every moral virtue, and fruitful of almoſt every vice. There are now but few traces to be found of that temperance, that ſobriety, that decent ſimplicity of manners, which adorned the characters of our anceſtors; all is low, little, and trifling amongſt us; we eagerly catch at every faſhionable folly, and plunge deeper and deeper every day into extravagance and luxury.

Another alarming ſymptom of our approaching ruin, and a diſtinguiſhing part of our character, is that ſpirit of infidelity, that diſregard to principle, which is ſo prevalent in the midſt of us. Chriſtianity is now not only ridiculed and railed at with very little reſerve, but the great principles of natural religion themſelves are openly attacked. It is well known that many perſons in high life, and ſome of them too of diſtinguiſhed abilities, laugh at the doctrines of a particular providence and future ſtate. Nor are they ſingular in this reſpect: the contagion has ſpread wide, and every dapper fellow behind a counter, who ſeems to be of no larger a ſize of underſtanding than what is neceſſary to ſell a pound of tobacco, or a yard of muſlin, is now become a mite of ſcepticiſm, and piques himſelf upon his

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infidelity. When ſuch principles therefore, or rather, when ſuch want of principle falls in with a ſtrong paſſion for ſhow and pleaſure, no wonder we ſhould run headlong into the moſt diſſolute conduct.

Such then is our ſituation, and ſuch our character: and I would now aſk any diſcerning, any conſiderate obſerver, what muſt the *end* of all this be? If no effectual check is given to our prevailing manners; it is eaſy to ſee what muſt be the conſequence; it muſt certainly be ſuch as is ſufficient to make even a ſtoic tremble. For ſhould we, by ſome unexpected turn in our favour, have it in our power to force the *French* to reaſonable terms of peace, (which, however, is no very probable ſuppoſition) it is natural to imagine that we ſhould ſtill move on in the ſame track of luxury and effeminacy, and, conſequently, be ripening every day for a ſtate of ſlavery and dependence; while our enemies are ſteadily purſuing their ambitious ſcheme, and making quick advances to univerſal monarchy.

Is there a *Briton* now who can ſeriouſly think of theſe things without being alarmed? Who can take an impartial and deliberate ſurvey of our ſituation and character, without being ſtruck with the utmoſt

concern? BRITAIN, once the boaſt and confidence of her friends, the envy and dread of her enemies, the nurſe of heroes, the glory and admiration of mankind, is now, alas! a reproach among the nations, the ſchool of licentiouſneſs and unmanly luxury, loſt to public ſpirit, and to every great and generous principle. How is her glory fallen, and her honours laid in the duſt! How degenerate are her ſons, and how alarming her ſituation!

It can afford but ſmall pleaſure to a generous mind to contemplate ſuch a picture, or to enlarge on ſuch a ſubject; it is neceſſary, however, to be awakened to a juſt ſenſe of our danger, and to have our minds deeply impreſſed with it. If this end is anſwered by any thing I have already ſaid, or ſhall ſay upon the ſubject, ſome good effect may be expected from it. For though I cannot help thinking our ſituation extremely dangerous, I am far from looking upon it as deſperate. BRITAIN, though at preſent in a weak and languiſhing condition, and bowed down almoſt to the ground, may ſtill raiſe her head, recover her former health and vigour, and reaſſume her native ſtation of dignity and honour. A time of public danger is a proper

ſeaſon for ſerious conſideration; and ſerious conſideration is the ſource of every thing great and noble. I ſhall reckon myſelf extremely happy, therefore, if I can prevail upon my countrymen to reflect ſeriouſly, to examine each his own character and conduct impartially, and to draw from thence the propereſt uſe of animadverting upon the character and conduct of the public, *viz.* his own private reformation. Thus it will be in the power of almoſt every individual to contribute ſomewhat towards raiſing his country from that infamy under which it at preſent lies.

But tho' conſideration and ſerious reflection be, in our preſent circumſtances, the duty of all, it is peculiarly incumbent upon thoſe in the higher ſtations of life. Their obligations to this duty ariſe from a variety of reaſons, and particularly from the powerful efficacy of their example. Their manners are eagerly copied by thoſe in the lower claſſes of life, ſo that they have it in their power to make virtue or vice faſhionable; and how powerful a principle a regard to *faſhion* is with the generality of mankind, muſt be obvious to all. To them, therefore, does BRITAIN addreſs herſelf in her preſent diſtreſsful ſituation;

ſhe earneſtly implores their aid, and intreats them in the moſt affectionate manner, to raiſe her from that weak, infirm, and languiſhing condition, to which ſhe is reduced. And can they refuſe to grant her requeſt? Will they not lend an ear to a tender, indulgent aged parent, whoſe ſolicitous care has made ſo large, ſo bountiful a proviſion for them, and ſcattered round them ſo rich a profuſion of bleſſings? Will they by their luxurious, extravagant, and diſſolute conduct, reduce her to a ſtate of indigence, and ignominious bondage?

If the voice of their country which calls ſo loudly for their aſſiſtance, cannot reach their ears, I have little reaſon to imagine that any thing I can urge will move or affect them. I am far, however, from entertaining ſuch ſentiments of them, as to imagine, that they are ſo immerſed in voluptuouſneſs and effeminacy, as to have no *feelings* for their country, no principles of honour or generoſity to animate their breaſts. I know, and I rejoice in the thought, that there are ſtill in the higher ranks of life, ſome who are ornaments to their exalted ſtations, perſons of the ſtricteſt integrity, and the moſt diſintereſted ſpirit, who would have done honour to the moſt virtuous ages

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of *Greece* or *Rome*: there are others too, who, tho' they have drank largely of the cup of pleaſure, are not intoxicated with the draught; tho' they have plunged deep into luxurious effeminacy, have not loſt the dear *idea* of their country, but are ſtill, I hope, capable of riſing to manly virtue, and of exerting themſelves with vigour and ſpirit in the beſt of cauſes, the public welfare.

To ſuch I would beg leave to addreſs myſelf, and to urge a few plain conſiderations with that freedom which becomes a *Briton*, and a lover of his country. To what higher dignity, to what greater glory, I would aſk them, can any mortal aſpire, than to be a pattern of virtue, a guardian of public liberty, to controul bad, and to ſupport good government, to check the progreſs of profaneneſs, immorality, and luxury, and to encourage every thing that has a tendency to advance the public good? What greater joy, what more ſubſtantial pleaſure, was ever felt by any, than what muſt be felt by the *real patriot*, by the man who bends all the force of his underſtanding, who directs all his thoughts and actions, to the good of his country, and whoſe whole life is one continued ſcene of great and ge-

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nerous efforts in its ſervice? On the contrary, what meanneſs muſt be inherent in the ſoul of that man, who, tho' poſſeſſed of high rank, and conſequently, of eminent advantages for public uſefulneſs, voluntarily degrades himſelf, and ſinks into the loweſt rank amongſt the ſons of men? Who waſtes his health and vigour in ſenſual indulgences, his fortune in riot and intemperance; who deſcends from the nobleſt occupation of which human nature is capable to a ſcene of trifling amuſements, and low cares, from the government of men to that of hounds and horſes; who exchanges the ſatisfactions of the man, for the gratifications of the brute: who, inſtead of being a pattern of virtue, ſpreads wide the infection of vice and licentiouſneſs?

If the ſervice of our country be a real duty, as muſt, I am perſuaded, be readily allowed by all, then certainly our obligations to the performance of it are in proportion to the means and opportunities we have of performing it. Now, exalted ſtation, and high rank in a ſtate, by what means ſoever acquired, are noble prerogatives, and lay thoſe who are poſſeſſed of them under indiſpenſible obligations to dedicate their time and talents to the ſervice of the public, as they

they afford many advantages and various opportunities for uſefulneſs. Nor can any thing indeed diſcharge them from theſe obligations, while their country ſtands in need of their ſervices: inſtead therefore of denying or evading them, every man, who has the leaſt ſpark of generoſity in his breaſt, will, with pleaſure and gratitude to the allwiſe governor of the univerſe, acknowledge and fulfil them. He will rejoice in the thought of his being placed in ſuch an exalted ſtation, of being formed capable of ſuch divine employment, and will never quit his native poſt of dignity and honour, or meanly degrade himſelf to idleneſs and ſenſuality.

Such a perſon will look upon it as a noble privilege to be exempted by the very condition of his birth, from thoſe numberleſs cares and anxieties, to which far the greateſt part of mankind are unavoidably ſubject, in order to ſecure for themſelves and their families a competent ſhare of the neceſſaries and conveniencies of life. Conſcious of, and thankful for, his ſuperior advantages, he will employ his leiſure in ſtoring his mind with uſeful knowledge, in inveſtigating the principles of legiſlation, the maxims of upright policy; will make himſelf

ſelf acquainted with the *Britiſh* conſtitution, the character and manners of his fellow-citizens, *Britain*'s connection with, and relation to, the other powers of *Europe*; will ſet himſelf in oppoſition to the corrupt practices and manners of the age he lives in; will prefer a moderate fortune with integrity, dignity, and independence, to the greateſt affluence without them; will endeavour to pluck up corruption by the roots; will hold faſt his own integrity; and ſupport with ſpirit and perſeverance the cauſe of his country.

In a word, ſuch a perſon's whole life and conduct, all his aims and views will be great and honourable. When his country is threatened with peculiar danger, either from without or from within, this will only ſerve to quicken his ardour, and call forth freſh ſtreams of vigour from his ſoul. If he has the honour of ſitting in the great aſſembly of the nation, he will look upon himſelf as bound by every motive that can affect a generous mind, by every tie that can bind a human ſoul, to diſcharge the ſacred and important truſt, with all his vigilance, all his application, and all his virtue. He will conſider that the liberty, the property, the honour, the virtue, the religion of his coun-

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try, are in his hands; that the fate of millions depends upon the honeſt and faithful diſcharge of his duty. If he has no place in the legiſlature, nor ſhare in the adminiſtration, he will, nevertheleſs, employ all his credit, all his authority, and all his influence, to promote the good of his country, by encouraging induſtry, by rewarding truth and integrity, by diſcountenancing every corrupt practice, by endeavouring to ſtop the progreſs of profaneneſs and luxury; he will lead others to virtue by his example, and, by every method in his power, will ſpread a ſpirit of patriotiſm, diligence, ſobriety, and temperance, all around him.

Such will be the conduct of each worthy patriot. And are not ye ſtruck, O ye great ones of BRITAIN, with the beauty of ſuch a character? Do not your ſouls take fire, while you contemplate it? Have ye no ſpark of genuine ambition to animate your breaſts? Behold, a large field of glory lies before you, a noble opportunity of acquiring immortal honour; a great and populous nation implores your aſſiſtance; a people, burthened with debts, enervated with luxury, ſinking under the weight of corruption and effeminacy, calls aloud for your aid. Here is a ſcene of glory, in-

deed! Could virtuous men aſk more of heaven; could heaven beſtow more upon mortal men, than to ſet them at the head of a degenerate, a luxurious, an almoſt undone people, and to give them the honour, the immortal honour, of reforming their manners, of reſtoring their power, and of making them once more great and happy? Theſe ſtrong and forcible motives, I flatter myſelf, will impreſs your minds, call up all your virtue, all your generoſity, and kindle the generous flame of patriotiſm in your breaſts.

As a *Briton*, I have a right, at ſo critical a juncture, to apply to you; as a ſincere lover of my country, in my own behalf, and in the behalf of millions of my fellow-ſubjects, I intreat and beſeech you to heal the wounds of BRITAIN. Her wounds are deep and bleeding; it is in your power to heal them, and from you we expect it. Your own intereſt, your own honour too, is cloſely connected and interwoven with that of the public; for whatever miſchiefs are brought upon your country, muſt fall on you and your poſterity. Let a regard, therefore, to private and to public intereſt, influence and regulate your conduct. Your taſk, I readily allow, is difficult; but

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where no difficulties are encountered, no glory can be acquired. To contend with ſtrong habits of luxury, effeminacy, and ſelfiſhneſs; to moderate the rage of pleaſure; to check the daring ſpirit of licentiouſneſs; to ſtem the torrent of profaneneſs and immorality; in a word, to draw back a degenerate and ſelfiſh people to virtue and public ſpirit, is an arduous undertaking. It is, however, a glorious one; and where much is attempted, ſomething will always be done. Nor ſhould you deſpair of ſucceſs: the manners of the age, tho' they are corrupt, yet they are not profligate; if you will only make the attempt, and *lead* the way in reformation, great things may ſtill be expected.

It is an ungrateful taſk, and may, perhaps, be looked upon as impertinent in a private perſon, to point out thoſe things in high life, which call aloud for reformation. I hope to be excuſed, however, as I mean to give offence to none, if I briefly mention a few things; for to touch upon all would lead me far beyond the bounds I have preſcribed to myſelf, and I have no inclination to enlarge upon ſo diſagreeable a theme. The firſt thing I would take notice of, is the almoſt intire waſte of all good princi-

ples, which, upon the moſt candid and impartial view of things, there is too much reaſon to complain of in the higher ſtations of life. It is now become faſhionable, and even a mark of politeneſs and good ſenſe, to declare for infidelity, and openly to renounce all regard to the great AUTHOR and FINISHER of the chriſtian *faith.* The inſtitutions of public worſhip are little regarded by the generality of the rich and great, who think it beneath them to pay their adorations to the ſupreme governor of the univerſe, the God *in whom they live, move, and have their being*, and ſcorn all inſtructions in wiſdom and virtue.

The day of ſacred reſt is become a day of indolence, and trifling amuſement; and the houſes of ſome are turned into aſſembly-rooms, and ſcandalouſly converted into places of diverſion for *public gaming*, in open violation of the laws both of God and man. What a melancholy reflection, what an alarming ſymptom is this! That thoſe who have the moſt liberal ſhare of the bleſſings of heaven, ſhould be moſt ungrateful to heaven! That thoſe who profeſs to believe in God, ſhould pay no homage to God! That thoſe who have the beſt opportunities for cultivating habits

bits of piety, ſhould be patterns of impiety!

The pernicious effects that ariſe from their example in this reſpect need not be mentioned; they are obvious to every conſiderate obſerver, and are lamented by every friend to his country. It is impoſſible that the authority of the civil magiſtrate can be firmly eſtabliſhed, or the peace and order of ſociety maintained without religion: he therefore who is an enemy to religion, is an enemy to his country; and whatever other good qualities he may be poſſeſſed of, while piety, while a reverential awe of Deity is wanting, his character can never be truly great and honourable. How greatly is it to be wiſhed therefore, that thoſe in ſuperior ſtations would ſeriouſly attend to this matter; and a ſmall ſhare of attention, one ſhould imagine, muſt be ſufficient to convince every conſiderate mind, that the ſolemn offices of *public worſhip* are duties of indiſpenſible moral obligation, the beſt cement of ſociety, and firmeſt props of government; and that to be quite deficient in performing thoſe duties which ariſe from our relation to the Almighty creator, and gracious governor of the univerſe, argues a ſtrange

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perverſion of reaſon, or depravity of heart.

What joy would it give to every well-diſpoſed, to every truly benevolent mind, to every well-wiſher to BRITAIN, to ſee thoſe in high life conſtant and regular in their attendance on public worſhip, paying their homage to the great Father of mercies, the original and ever-flowing fountain of good; acknowledging him with the warmeſt gratitude, and with all the juſt and natural marks of genuine devotion, as the author of their being, the preſerver of their lives, the fountain of all their preſent enjoyments, and the grand foundation of all their future hopes? How powerful a check would ſuch an example be to that diſregard to public worſhip which ſpreads ſo faſt among the middle and lower ranks of life; and what beneficial effects might be expected from it, both in regard to private families, and to the peace, order, and happineſs of ſociety in general?

But I ſhall drop this ſubject, and beg leave to mention another fatal miſchief that muſt be expelled; another foul ſtain that muſt be wiped off from thoſe in high life, before they can appear with real dignity, or be looked

looked upon by any truly conſiderate and benevolent mind as friends to their country. It is almoſt unneceſſary to ſay, what this foul ſtain is, as it muſt be obvious to every reader, that it can be no other than the *rage of gaming*; a paſſion, which ſeems to have totally ſwallowed up ſenſe, virtue, converſation, and the whole train of private and public affections; to have overturned the ambition of excellence; extinguiſhed the flames of patriotiſm; cruſhed all emulation, but that of fraud; and which threatens, in its further progreſs, to deſtroy all diſtinctions, both of rank and ſex. With what deep concern muſt it affect every generous mind, to ſee perſons of the higheſt ranks in life waſting their time, ſquandering their fortunes, voluntarily degrading themſelves to the low level of profeſſed gameſters, and herding with theſe as their chief intimates, and boſom friends!

It is impoſſible to deſcribe the complicated and ſubſtantial miſeries, the variety of diſtreſſes, that flow from this ſource. When the tide of fortune ebbs, every gloomy, every malignant paſſion of the mind is awakened; and then the poor *wretch*, who is under the influence of this faſhionable extravagance, is often heard

curſing himſelf, and blaſpheming his maker. Fury, horror, and deſpair take poſſeſſion of his breaſt; if he looks back, he is filled with remorſe and anguiſh; if he looks forward, miſery ſtares him full in the face: his eſtate is ſpent, his credit exhauſted, his wants are numerous, and he has no means of ſupplying them; what can he do? He throws the laſt fatal dye for eternity, and concludes the dreadful ſcene by a *piſtol*.

Such is frequently the effect of this faſhionable folly; and can any conſiderate perſon ſee ſo many of our nobility and gentry under the influence of it, diſgracing their anceſtors, and ruining their poſterity, without trembling for the fate of BRITAIN? Can any wiſe, can any good man help trembling, when he ſees our magiſtrates, the guardians of our laws, not only grown remiſs in the execution of them, but, by their example and encouragement, wantonly ſetting at defiance the very laws which themſelves have made or recommended? Is *Arthur*'s, I would aſk, a ſchool where our young nobility can learn the principles of legiſlation, the maxims of ſound policy, the intereſt of BRITAIN; where they can be formed to wiſdom, virtue, and integrity; where they can be taught the happy art of

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maintaining outward dignity, and enjoying inward ſatisfaction ?——

The conſiderate part of our nobility and gentry, who are not immerſed in this faſhionable abſurdity, will, I would fain flatter myſelf, take ſome ſpeedy and effectual method to prevent the farther ſpread of it, and to diſcountenance a practice which fills the land with violence and robbery, and which is the infamous characteriſtic of the age we live in.

The laſt thing I ſhall mention, is that *venal ſpirit* which is the curſe of the preſent generation, and the reproach of too many of the *great*. Corruption (alas for our degeneracy!) is eſtabliſhed and openly avowed; it has been not only defended, but recommended as a neceſſary expedient of government; neceſſary to preſerve the religion and liberties of theſe kingdoms. How precarious then is the foundation on which theſe ſacred intereſts depend? And who can help trembling, when he ſeriouſly conſiders, that their principal, or only ſecurities, are the corruption and perfidy of the worſt of men?

Such is our depravity, that we muſt be bought for every ſervice of our country; and we are as eaſily bought to betray and

ſacrifice it. If corruption, therefore, is not extinguiſhed; if ſome powerful remedy is not applied to this diſeaſe, we may languiſh on, for a little time, under impotence and contempt, but muſt ſoon ſink into utter ruin, and become a prey to ſome powerful and ambitious neighbour. Nor will palliating remedies be of any ſervice to us; the wound muſt be ſearched to the bottom; the inciſion-knife and the cauſtic muſt be uſed, before a radical cure can be wrought.

There are many other things that might be mentioned upon this ſubject, ſuch as the eager purſuit of pleaſure, the prevailing paſſion for ſhow and trifling amuſements, &c. but what I have already ſaid is fully ſufficient to ſhew the abſolute neceſſity of a ſpeedy reformation. We are indeed in a criſis that muſt turn to life or death; and that cannot turn to the former, if ſome efficacious remedies are not ſpeedily applied; for to palliate and prolong, in our condition, is to break and deſtroy our conſtitution. Thoſe of high rank and ſtation, therefore, will, I hope, nouriſh in themſelves, and cultivate in others, ſentiments worthy of the Britiſh genius; will conſider the national diſtreſs and danger with that attention which they deſerve: will, by one ge-

generous and noble effort, ſhake off thoſe unnatural fetters which chain them down to earth, and riſe to god-like dignity and honour; will relinquiſh their unmanly luxury and avarice, become patterns of frugality, temperance, and public ſpirit, and with diſintereſtedneſs, reſolution and activity, ſet about the great work of reformation.

Thus will they be applauded, nay almoſt worſhipped by every friend to BRITAIN; have the immortal honour of being the ſaviours of their country; enjoy the heart-felt ſatisfaction ariſing from conſcious integrity; and what is infinitely more than all, ſecure the favour, the eternal favour of the all-wiſe God and Father of all, who will not fail to reward their integrity, their ſteady perſevering virtue with unfading honour and immortal felicity. To conclude all: religion, liberty, their country, call aloud for their aſſiſtance; and if their cries are ineffectual, neither earth, nor hell, nor heaven, can move them.

I would now addreſs myſelf, very briefly, to thoſe in the middle ſtations of life, and earneſtly intreat them to guard againſt thoſe vices and follies which prevail among their ſuperiors. You cannot be inſenſible, my dear fellow-citizens, of the dangerous ſitua-

tion of your country; nor are you, I hope, indifferent to its beſt intereſts. To what cauſes its preſent infamy and diſtreſs are owing, muſt be obvious to you, upon the moſt ſuperficial reflection. Let us therefore lay aſide that low, that abject ſelfiſhneſs, that ſordid attention to our own narrow and private intereſts, which, I am afraid, has taken poſſeſſion of all our hearts; and let us conſider ourſelves, as we really are, members of one great community, to whom therefore nothing that relates to the advantage or prejudice of the whole, ought to be indifferent. Let us check that growing paſſion for pleaſure and gaiety, which baniſhes every thing ſerious, every thing great and manly, from the heart, engenders ſloth and luxury, and eradicates all thoſe virtues which are the ſtrength and ſupport of ſociety; and let us cultivate habits of induſtry, frugality, and temperance, which are the principal ſources of public and private happineſs.

I would particularly addreſs myſelf to parents, and all thoſe who have the important charge of educating youth, and beg of them to impreſs the minds of thoſe committed to their care with a deep ſenſe of what they owe to their country, to form them

them to juſt notions of liberty and public ſpirit, to inſpire them with a rational and fervent zeal for the welfare of BRITAIN, and with a juſt abhorrence and deteſtation of all mean, ſordid, and ſelf-intereſted views. Nor will this be ſo difficult a taſk as may at firſt be imagined: the human heart naturally beats ſtrong for liberty, and the minds of youth, before they are corrupted by bad example, are open and generous. By due care, therefore, a noble ſuperſtructure of virtue, generoſity, and public ſpirit, may be raiſed upon the foundation which is laid in nature; and if greater attention were given to this moral culture of the mind, the moſt beneficial effects might be expected from it. It is of great importance too, indeed of principal importance, in education, to fix early habits of temperance and ſelf-government, which are the genuine ſources of health and vigour both of body and mind; and to guard againſt luxurious eaſe and intemperance; thoſe noxious weeds, which will ſuffocate the ſeeds of wiſdom and virtue, and by their rankneſs and luxuriancy, deprive them of their neceſſary nouriſhment, and hinder their ever riſing to a ſtate of maturity.

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The depravity of our manners, indeed, and the preſent degeneracy, render education a difficult taſk. It is incumbent therefore upon all parents and tutors to double their diligence, and to conſider ſeriouſly how much depends upon the faithful diſcharge of their duty. Every parent and every tutor ought to have his mind deeply impreſſed with this thought---that he is intruſted with the care of reaſonable beings formed for immortality, whoſe happineſs for time and eternity in a great meaſure depends upon his diſcharging his duty with diligence and integrity. An awful thought this; and O that it were duly attended to! Then might we expect to ſee parents more watchful over their own conduct, more regular and temperate in their behaviour, more deſirous of ſeeing their children *riſe* to virtue and public uſefulneſs, than of ſeeing them *riſe* in the world, more ſolicitous to form them into good citizens and uſeful members of the ſtate, in their reſpective characters, and relations of parents, magiſtrates, ſubjects and ſoldiers, than to teach them the readieſt knack of making or improving a fortune, without any regard to a *public*, or to ſocial connections.

The general ſyſtem of modern education is indeed ſo very abſurd, and the negligence of parents and tutors in regard to forming the minds of youth to virtue, honour, and public ſpirit, is, in general, ſo great, that it is not at all ſurpriſing, the public ſhould feel the effects of it. But it is not my deſign to point out the abſurdities and defects of modern education; many of them are too obvious to eſcape the moſt ſuperficial obſervation: I would only earneſtly beg of all thoſe who are entruſted with the care of youth, to conſider ſeriouſly the importance of their truſt; that it is of more conſequence to form good citizens than good ſcholars; that happineſs is more intimately connected with virtue than with knowledge; and that it is the great buſineſs, the great end of education, to form *wiſe and good creatures*, happy in themſelves, and truly uſeful to others.

But I muſt conclude what I have to ſay on this head; the preſent circumſtances of BRITAIN, my dear countrymen, make it the indiſpenſible duty of each of us, to take an impartial and deliberate ſurvey of our own characters, and to conſider attentively what lengths we have gone in the faſhionable vices and follies of the age we live in.

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This will be of great ſervice to ourſelves, and may be attended with conſiderable advantages to the public; it will put us, if we have any remaining regard for our own happineſs, the happineſs of our families, or the welfare of our country, upon correcting the irregularities of our paſt conduct, and will greatly check that growing levity and diſſipation of mind, which are the greateſt hindrances to ſober thought and reflection, and conſequently to all improvements in virtue and real goodneſs. It is likewiſe incumbent upon all the friends of virtue and of their country, and many ſuch, I am perſuaded, are ſtill to be found in the middle ſtations of life, to ſtrengthen the hearts and the hands of each other; to animate and encourage all thoſe over whom they have any influence, to unite their endeavours for reforming abuſes, promoting induſtry, checking the progreſs of profaneneſs, immorality, and luxury, and ſpreading a ſenſe of piety and univerſal virtue. Were all good men true to one another, at ſo important a juncture, much might certainly be done towards reviving public virtue, a ſpirit of genuine patriotiſm, and making us once more a flouriſhing and happy people.

I would now beg leave to addreſs myſelf, with great plainneſs and freedom of ſpeech, to the clergy of the CHURCH of ENGLAND, who, I hope, will excuſe a private perſon for calling upon them, in a ſerious and affectionate manner, to conſider what part it is incumbent upon them to act in the preſent critical ſituation of their country; and how far they are chargeable with that diſregard to religion, that profaneneſs, impiety, and ſcepticiſm, which have grown to ſuch a height, and are daily ſpreading among us. I can ſay with great ſincerity, that there is no character on earth I reſpect ſo much as that of a pious and worthy clergyman, whoſe delight and pleaſure it is to diſcharge with fidelity and diligence, the important duties of his ſtation: I could almoſt bow the knee to ſuch a perſon; whereas, on the other hand, I look upon a worthleſs clergyman as the moſt deſpicable wretch that lives, and an object of juſt contempt, in what ſtation ſoever he is placed, archbiſhop, biſhop, dean, or curate. To the former, therefore, I ſhall be extremely ſorry if my freedom gives any offence; as for what the latter may think or ſay of me, it ſhall give me no manner of concern.

Without any farther apology then, gentlemen, I can't help obſerving, that a great part of the irreligion and infidelity of the age we live in is chargeable upon you. I heartily wiſh, for the honour of your order, that I was ſingular in this opinion; but as I am far from being ſo, it cannot, at leaſt it ought not, to be deemed an unfriendly office, to lay before you ſome of the reaſons which ſupport this opinion, that if you are unjuſtly blamed, you may have an opportunity of vindicating yourſelves. In the firſt place then, your ſolemnly ſubſcribing *articles*, which it is notorious you do not believe, and your declaring publickly, in the preſence of the great SEARCHER OF HEARTS, your *unfeigned aſſent and conſent* to forms, in divine worſhip, which, it is well known, you diſapprove of, is one principal cauſe of infidelity and ſcepticiſm. The *articles of religion*, to which you ſolemnly ſubſcribe, are *Calviniſtic*. Now I preſume it will not be denied, that the generality of you have embraced the *Unitarian* and *Arminian* ſchemes. What, then, muſt every ſober enquirer think of perſons in the *Unitarian* ſcheme, when they ſtand forth before God, and call upon him to witneſs to their ſincerity, when they ſubſcribe articles, which ſtrongly aſſert, *that there is but one living*

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and true God; that in the unity of the godhead there be three perſons of one ſubſtance, power, and eternity, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt; that the Son is the very and eternal God, of one ſubſtance with the Father; and that the creed of Athanaſius ought thoroughly to be received and believed; for it may be proved by moſt certain warrants of Holy Scripture? Muſt not he look upon them as vile diſſemblers, as groſs hypocrites, as guilty of the moſt ſhameful prevarication? With what face, I would aſk any honeſt, any conſiderate perſon, with what proſpect of ſucceſs, can ſuch clergymen preach up the great doctrines of ſincerity and ſimplicity of heart, which are ſo ſtrongly recommended and inforced by the great CAPTAIN *of our Salvation?* Inſtead of being patterns of uncorrupted faith and integrity, are not they public examples of inſincerity? Do not ſuch perſons deſerve the contempt and indignation of ſociety; and muſt not they be conſidered as a burthen, a heavy and uſeleſs burthen upon a nation? Is it poſſible to believe them *in earneſt*, when they recommend Chriſtianity, and ſet forth the dangers of Unbelief and Hypocriſy? or is it at all ſurpriſing, that the profeſſion of Chriſtianity ſhould be looked upon by many as mere artifice and pretence?

There are, I am very ſenſible, many jeſuitical ſhifts and quibbles, many forced explications, by which clergymen endeavour to palliate their conduct in regard to ſubſcriptions; but they are all ſuch as have a direct tendency to defeat the uſe of language among men, and ſuch as any man who had a regard to his honour and reputation would be aſhamed to make uſe of in the tranſactions of commercial or civil life; or if he did, would conſign himſelf over to infamy and reproach.

I would aſk you, gentlemen, I would particularly aſk the governors of our church, in the ſpirit of meekneſs and ſerioufneſs, whether impoſing on miniſters ſubſcriptions to *explanatory articles* of faith, has ever been of any real ſervice to Chriſtianity, to the intereſts of truth and ſincerity; or whether it has not been a fruitful ſource of contention and animoſity, of blind zeal, uncharitableneſs, and party-ſpirit; a principal obſtruction to peace and unity; a ſnare to conſcience; an occaſion of inſincerity and equivocation; a juſt cauſe to *Papiſts* of reproaching *Proteſtant churches* with inconſiſtent and contradictory opinions and practices? I would aſk, whether it has ever proved, or whether it is poſſible in the nature of the thing it ſhould prove, the leaſt

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guard againſt *error*, or the leaſt ſecurity to truth? Once more, I would aſk, gentlemen, whether your ſubſcribing *articles*, which, it is certain, many of the wiſeſt and beſt of you do not believe, muſt not neceſſarily and unavoidably create ſtrong prejudices againſt you, and prevent your uſefulneſs? It certainly muſt; and is undoubtedly one principal reaſon of that contempt under which your order has ſo juſtly fallen, and under which it muſt eternally remain, if the *ſtumbling-block* is not removed, and greater evidence given that you really are what you profeſs to be.

It is indeed aſtoniſhing, if any thing of this kind can be matter of aſtoniſhment to one acquainted with eccleſiaſtical hiſtory, that in ſo enlightened an age as the preſent, ſo abſurd and contradictory a practice as that of *impoſing* ſubſcription to *explanatory articles* of faith, ſhould be continued in any *Proteſtant church*. That the ſcripture is the only rule of faith, the ſtandard of divine truth; that the church has no other rule of her faith and practice; and that this rule was intended for the *common benefit* of all Chriſtians, are the acknowledged principles of every Proteſtant church, and of every conſiſtent Proteſtant. Now thoſe who form articles of faith, and draw up creeds, concerning

cerning the ſenſe of ſcripture, though ſuch articles and creeds do, in their opinion, agree with the doctrine of ſcripture, and though thus far they, who frame them, may be ſaid to make the ſcripture the rule of their own faith; yet when they make the belief of theſe their articles and creeds neceſſary to the admiſſion of others into the miniſtry of the church, they then make, not what they certainly know to be ſcripture, but their own ſenſe of ſcripture, compriſed in ſuch articles, the rule of ſuch admiſſion. They plainly lay the infallible ſcripture aſide as the rule of judgment, and exclude it as a proper or ſufficient teſt of ſoundneſs in the faith; and in fact declare their own fallible interpretation of it to be a better and ſurer teſt; and thus conſtitute *one ſupreme teſt* of orthodoxy for themſelves, *viz.* The ſacred ſcriptures; and *another* ſupreme teſt of orthodoxy for others, *viz.* What they themſelves affirm to be the meaning of it. They are thus guilty of the moſt manifeſt contradiction and abſurdity, in making ſcripture the rule of faith, and denying it to be ſuch, in receiving and rejecting it as the ſtandard of divine truth, and in prefering a fallible rule to an infallible one.

Another

Another ſource of infidelity and ſcepticiſm, gentlemen, is this: *Chriſtianity*, if we take our notions of it from our *public forms*, and the *rituals* of our church, carries in it plain marks of impoſture; and ſtrong ſuſpicions that it could not poſſibly come from God. The conſtitution of the *church of England*, indeed, and that of the *church of Chriſt*, are widely different, as might be clearly ſhewn by a diſtinct enumeration of particulars; but ſuch an enumeration would lead me beyond the bounds I have preſcribed to myſelf. All that I ſhall ſay therefore under this head is, that it is incumbent upon every clergyman, who has any regard for the honour of our eccleſiaſtical conſtitution, for the honour of Chriſtianity, or the intereſts of true religion, to uſe his utmoſt power and influence, in order to bring about an alteration of thoſe things, which, in the opinion of many of the beſt and wiſeſt men of every denomination, ought to be altered; and wholly to remove ſome others, which expoſe our church to the cenſure of her avowed enemies, are inconſiſtent with the principles of *true Proteſtantiſm*, and greatly prejudicial to the intereſts of virtue and true religion in the midſt of us. Were the church of *England* to remove ſome of her *incloſures*, which

which ſhe might do without ſhaking any of her *foundations*, or endangering her ſafety; were ſhe to take away the *wall of partition* between herſelf and other Proteſtants, which ſhe might do without weakening any of her real ſecurities; were ſhe to extend her arms, as wide as thoſe of Chriſt and the apoſtles were extended, and open her boſom to all thoſe who are willing to embrace her upon the terms preſcribed by Chriſt, which ſhe might do without altering her habit, or leſſening her privileges; in a word, were ſhe not only to deſert but level thoſe out-works which ſhe knows to be *untenable*, ſhe would then ſtand firm againſt the combined force of her avowed and inveterate enemies, againſt the attacks of ſceptics and infidels, ſuſtain the ſhock of every riſing ſtorm, and ſtrike every beholder with reverence and admiration.

Another fruitful ſource of profaneneſs, ſcepticiſm, and infidelity, is the idleneſs, the mercenary and intereſted views, and the immoral lives of ſuch numbers of you gentlemen of the clergy. I mean not to reproach the whole order; in ſo large a body, it would be ſtrange if there were not, and I am ſenſible there are, many perſons of irreproachable lives, *workmen that need not to be aſhamed*, faithful and diligent

in their maſter's ſervice. It cannot, however, be denied, for it is obvious to every impartial obſerver, that the generality of you are very negligent in the diſcharge of your duty, far gone in the faſhionable follies of a luxurious and effeminate age, nay, and that many of you, I am ſorry to ſay it, are ſcandalouſly immoral in your behaviour.

An ingenious and ſenſible writer of your own order, in his *eſtimate of the manners and principles of the times*, honeſtly and candidly acknowledges, that ſuch of you as have an opportunity of converſing with what is called *the world*, and are ſuppoſed to make a part of it, inſtead of *curbing*, *promote* and encourage the trifling manners of the times; that it is grown a faſhionable thing among you, to deſpiſe the duties of your pariſh, to wander about as the various ſeaſons invite, to every ſcene of falſe gaiety; to *frequent* and *ſhine* in all *public* places, your own *pulpits* excepted; that inſtead of a manly and rational regard to the welfare of mankind, the chief employment of many a clerical life is, to ſlumber in a *ſtall*, haunt *levees*, or follow the gainful trade of *election-jobbing*; that a general neglect of *letters* is even creeping upon you; and that inſtead of lauching into the *deeps* of learn-

ing, the fashionable *divine* hardly ventures on the *shallows*.

A melancholy picture this; and such an one as no generous mind can take pleasure in contemplating! It highly concerns you therefore, gentlemen, to consider how far the picture is just, and to deliver yourselves from the general contempt, which you have, I am afraid, too justly incurred. You profess yourselves to be teachers of virtue, and you are maintained by the public, at an immense expence, for this purpose. Now the most effectual way of teaching virtue, is to practise it; for the influence of example, you cannot but know, is much greater than that of precept. If instead of being examples of virtue and piety, therefore, you promote and encourage vice and immorality, you are a disgrace to your profession, a burthen, nay, a curse to society, and deserve to be treated with contempt and abhorrence by every friend to virtue and religion.

Consider, gentlemen, for it certainly deserves your most serious consideration, that the world expects a high pitch of purity from you; an elevation of soul above this present sensible world, and all the transitory enjoyments of it; an unfeigned good-will and kind affection to your brethren of mankind,

kind, and an ardent zeal for promoting their beſt intereſts; a blameleſsneſs of life, and dignity of behaviour, without which you can never diſcharge the duties of your important ſtation, with pleaſure to yourſelves, or great advantage to others. You are, indeed, under two different ſorts of obligation; the one is to perform all thoſe duties, which belong to your private ſtation as men and Chriſtians; the other is, to perform ſuch duties as belong to that public ſtation, wherein providence has placed you. It is not ſufficient, therefore, that a clergyman behaves irreproachably in private life, that he faithfully diſcharges the duties of a father, a ſon, a huſband, a maſter, or a friend: he muſt maintain an habitual and ſteady regard to the great end of his office, diſcover a fervent zeal to promote the eternal welfare of thoſe committed to his care, and ſtudy to avoid every indecency of conduct, that may expoſe him to contempt, or obſtruct his uſefulneſs.

Conſider, gentlemen, that the criminal omiſſion or careleſs performance of the important duties of your ſtation, may be as prejudicial to the great intereſts of mankind in this or another life, as poſitive acts of vice, and may be followed, for any thing we know, by as ſevere chaſtiſements in this

world, or as dreadful puniſhments in another. If vicious habits take root, and grow up to ſtrength and maturity, in the minds of thoſe committed to your care, through your careleſsneſs or bad example, what extenſive and complicated miſchief and miſery muſt this occaſion? And may not ſuch extenſive and complicated miſery be juſtly charged upon you? If you ſuffer ſerious impreſſions to wear out of your people's minds by your neglecting to fix them, may not ſeveral generations paſs away before they can be renewed? This is an awful thought, ſurely, and ought to be ſeriouſly attended to by every one who enters upon the chriſtian miniſtry. What bitter remorſe and anguiſh, what deep diſtreſs muſt that clergyman feel, who reflects (and there are times and ſeaſons which will force the moſt giddy and inconſiderate to reflect) that many of thoſe who were committed to his care, have become hardened and obſtinate offenders, irrecoverably loſt to virtue, and peſts to ſociety, who, if he had been faithful in the diſcharge of his duty, might have proved uſeful members of ſociety, and ornaments to religion? It is indeed ſcarce poſſible to conceive more ſubſtantial diſtreſs than this; and ſuch muſt be the diſtreſs of every worthleſs clergyman, when he reflects. Once

Once more, gentlemen, let me intreat you to conſider, and if you have any principles of virtue, any benevolence to mankind, you will conſider, that the preſent critical ſituation of your country lays you under indiſpenſible obligations to exert yourſelves to the utmoſt of your power, to attend diligently to the duties of your ſtation, and to promote that reformation, which is neceſſary to avert the divine diſpleaſure, and to prolong and eſtabliſh the public ſecurity. Looſe and ſceptical principles are ſpreading through the land; Chriſtianity lies bleeding of wounds it has received *in the houſe of its friends*; wounds by far the moſt dangerous of any it ſuffers; luxury and the love of pleaſure have infected the minds, and bewitched the imaginations of all degrees of men; various and new kinds of diverſion are daily invented, wholly unknown to our anceſtors, and which the generous ſeverity of former times would never have endured; theſe diverſions are fruitful ſources of extravagance, powerful allurements to the neglect of buſineſs, threaten the proſperity of our commerce, ſtraiten men in their payments, put them upon making deſperate puſhes to retrieve their circumſtances, upon unfair and wicked meaſures of trade, to the injury

jury of honeſt men, and the detriment of government itſelf; encreaſe the number of lawleſs and profligate wretches, who defy all law, and commit thoſe enormities that are often fatal to themſelves, deſtructive of the public peace, aud in the natural courſe of things tend to the diſſolution of government; in a word, they wear off thoſe awes of Deity, and thoſe ſerious impreſſions of religion and virtue, which are the only ſure reſtraints upon our paſſions, and introduce that habitual levity and diſſipation, which baniſhes every thing grave and manly from the mind.

If this be a true repreſentation of the ſtate of things amongſt us, and for the truth of it I appeal to every ſenſible and impartial obſerver, is it not a loud call upon you gentlemen of the clergy to beſtir yourſelves? Can you remain indifferent or inſenſible in ſuch a ſituation of your country? Can you, at ſuch a juncture, deſert your native poſts of honour and uſefulneſs, the care of your reſpective congregations, and trifle away your time amidſt thoughtleſs gaiety, and in a round of inſignificance? Is this the ſervice the great CAPTAIN *of your ſalvation* requires at your hands; this the regard you ſhew for the honour of Chriſtianity, and the intereſts of immortal ſouls?

ſouls? Is it for this the public maintains you at ſuch an immenſe expence? Has BRITAIN no other uſe for her treaſures, but to laviſh them upon idle and effeminate drones, who waſte their time in luxurious indolence, and leave the care of their flocks to ſome poor hireling, with a ſcanty pittance for his maintenance? If the preſent ſtate of things does not rouſe you from your lethargy, and awaken you to diligence and aſſiduity in the diſcharge of the important duties of your office, can you with any face complain of the contempt that is thrown upon your order, or be ſurpriſed that you are diſregarded by every friend to virtue, the ſcoff of the profane and diſſolute, and the ſcorn of the infidel?

Give me leave, gentlemen, to mention one thing more, which requires your ſerious attention. The emiſſaries of Popery are taking advantage of our follies and vices, are labouring aſſiduouſly to gain over proſelytes to their ſuperſtitions and idolatries; and it is well known that they are too ſucceſsful, eſpecially among the lower part of our people. Nor is this at all to be wondered at. Religion is too much interwoven into the very conſciences of men, wholly to extirpate it out of them; and the religion that moſt favours their vices, bad men will be

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fond of, and eaſily fall into that, which will give them the greateſt eaſe and ſecurity in the commiſſion of them. Now every convert to Popery among us becomes an enemy to his country, a rebel in his heart to his prince, and wants only an opportunity of giving his aſſiſtance to the deſtruction of both. If you have any remaining regard therefore, gentlemen, for the intereſts of pure and undefiled religion, for the Proteſtant cauſe, for the honour of your church; if you have any loyalty to your prince, or love to your country, let this conſideration animate you to repel a growing evil; an evil, indeed, which had you been true to your truſt, had not ſpread ſo far. Shall the emiſſaries of *Rome* be more active and diligent in teaching the inventions and doctrines, the lyes and legends of *men*, than you are in teaching the pure and uncorrupted doctrines of the word of *God?* More zealous in ſpreading the triumphs of the kingdom of *Anti-Chriſt*, than you are in ſpreading thoſe of the kingdom of *Chriſt?* Are blind obedience and implicit faith, the dungeons and fires of an inquiſition, the gaudy pomp and pageantry of ſenſeleſs rites and ceremonies, the ſacrifices of prayer and thankſgiving to thoſe who neither deſerve our homage, nor

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can reward it, the maxims of the moſt execrable ſuperſtition, the moſt wanton cruelty, and infernal bigotry, better worth contending for than rational faith, the rights of private judgement, the mild and condeſcending ſpirit of the religion of *Jeſus*, the ſimplicity and purity of goſpel-worſhip, the fair, open, candid, and generous principles of Proteſtantiſm?

The goſpel-miniſtry, gentlemen, will be readily acknowledged by every ſerious and conſiderate perſon to be an eminently uſeful and honourable ſervice, and to be juſtly entitled not only to a decent but a liberal maintenance. But when the miniſters of the goſpel, inſtead of anſwering the great and important ends of their office, inſtead of being exemplary in their lives, and faithful to their truſt, are idle and negligent, lead ſenſual and luxurious lives, are immoral in their behaviour, and more ſolicitous for worldly honours and preferments, than for advancing the intereſts of piety and virtue, they not only forfeit all title to eſteem and regard, but contribute greatly to the ſpread of irreligion and infidelity.

The language of the world to the teachers of religion has ever been, and to the end of time will be, *What do you more than others?* Mankind, in general, examine their

conduct with great ſeverity, and expect from them a higher pitch of purity, a more regular and blameleſs behaviour, and a greater abſtractedneſs from the affairs of the world than they do from others. It is therefore incumbent upon them to watch over their own conduct with great care; for on their conduct depends, in a great meaſure, their ſucceſs: it is indeed one principal inſtrument, by which they attain the end of their miniſtrations. An inſpector into the conduct of others ought ſurely to be unexceptionable as to his own; if he is not, his miniſtry will be deſpiſed, and his doctrine neglected; if he is heard at all, he will be heard with indifference; his exhortations will be vilified, his conſolations prove inſipid, the edge of his reproofs will be blunted, his perſon will be contemned; religion itſelf will be brought under ſuſpicion at leaſt, if not into contempt; men of unſettled principles, or wicked lives, will rave with little reſerve againſt prieſts and their craft, and plunge into the depths of ſcepticiſm and infidelity.

On the other hand, how amiable, how honourable is the character of a worthy clergyman! How great his uſefulneſs! When in the pulpit he preaches what he practiſes; when out of it, he practiſes what he

he preaches; having taſted the ſublime, the refined pleaſures of religion himſelf, he is expreſſibly ſolicitous to make others taſte them likewiſe; the ſeveral virtues of divine life he will paint with a maſterly hand in their genuine colours, and juſt proportions, for he will paint them from their living and beautiful originals in his own breaſt; he will warmly recommend them, becauſe he warmly loves them; like his divine maſter, he will teach, *as one having authority*; being poſſeſſed of unfeigned good-will and kind affection to all his brethren of mankind, and eſpecially to thoſe committed to his care, he will conſider them as children of the ſame great parent of all, as partakers of the ſame nature, as exiles in the ſame place of baniſhment from their native country, as fellow-travellers to the ſame unſeen world, as in the ſame ſtate of ignorance, corruption and guilt, and under theſe tender and endearing views, his heart will ſtream out towards them in a ſtrong flow of love and good-will, and he will have an ardent deſire of promoting their beſt intereſts. He will look upon the people of his congregation as a certain portion of thoſe fellow-travellers through this journey of human life, committed to his care; and, by the appointment of provi-

dence, eſpecially intruſted to him for direction, aſſiſtance, and conſolation. He will inſtruct them when ignorant, help them when in ſtraits, comfort them when in diſtreſs; he will enter into their concerns, take their pains and feelings upon him, and watch for opportunities to do them good; he will make it his buſineſs to compoſe differences, to extinguiſh animoſities, to comfort the melancholy heart, and to give counſel to the perplexed; he will lay hold of every favourable opportunity of conveying valuable inſtructions and religious impreſſions to minds little ſuſceptible of them on other occaſions; like a good ſhepherd, he will feed his flock *with food convenient for them*, will lead them into *green paſtures*, and like the GREAT SHEPHERD of SOULS, will be conſtantly doing them good. He will reprove vice, and recommend virtue with proper dignity; ſecure the eſteem and regard of the wiſe and good; extort reverence even from the profane and diſſolute; and by the integrity, unblameableneſs, and beauty of his behaviour, recommend religion to the approbation of all around him.

Such is the character, and ſuch will be the conduct of every worthy clergyman; by an imitation of which, gentlemen, you will be honoured and eſteemed by every friend

friend to virtue, reſcue your characters from that contempt under which they have fallen, ſhew yourſelves real friends to religion, your country, and the Proteſtant cauſe; and when all the enjoyments and pleaſures of the preſent life are at an end, will, in the great and awful day of univerſal recompence, have the approbation of Omniſcience, the applauſes of angels and of men, and ſhine with diſtinguiſhed honour among the ſaints in reſt, through the boundleſs ages of eternity. If theſe conſiderations do not move and affect you, you are loſt to every generous, every virtuous feeling, and are utterly ſtupid, callous, and inſenſible.

Before I conclude, let me once more earneſtly intreat my dear countrymen of all ranks and denominations, to exert themſelves with vigour and integrity in their country's cauſe. Let us all conſider, that unleſs ſome powerful check is given to the prevailing manners and degenerate principles of the age we live in, BRITAIN, that mighty kingdom, which once gave laws to the main, and long held the balance of power between contending empires, muſt ſoon (diſtreſſing thought!) become a deſpicable province to *France*: and when BRITAIN falls, then falls the temple of religion, then falls

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the bulwark of the Proteſtant intereſt: when BRITAIN falls, then liberty expires.

Let us wake therefore from our fatal ſlumber of luxury and pleaſure, kindle in the breaſts of one another the generous flame of public ſpirit, and genuine patriotiſm, and deliver down to poſterity thoſe invaluable bleſſings which our brave anceſtors, with ſo much virtue, and at ſo vaſt an expence of blood and treaſure, delivered down to us. And, to conclude, let us all, with one heart, and one voice, offer up our fervent ſupplications to the great Father of mercies, the ſupreme governor among the nations, and earneſtly beg that he would be graciouſly pleaſed to pour out upon all ranks and degrees of perſons in the midſt of us, a ſpirit of ſerious conſideration, of manly piety, of humble repentance, and reformation of all our national vices; that he would reſtrain that profaneneſs and blaſphemy, that diſregard to religion, that inconſideration and levity, that unbounded vanity, luxury, and groſs ſenſuality, which are prevalent in the midſt of us, and which are a diſgrace to, and tend to the utter ruin of, all civil ſocieties; that he would unite the hearts of all the inhabitants of theſe lands in the fear of his holy name, in a joint purſuit of one common

mon intereſt, in brotherly love, and chriſtian charity, one towards another; that he would raiſe our great men above every mean, groveling, and ſordid purſuit, inſpire them with a ſpirit of true patriotiſm, and animate them with a warm and prudent zeal to promote the true honour and welfare of thoſe nations to which they belong; that he would inſpire our ſoldiers with true courage and magnanimity, go forth with our fleets and armies, and crown them with victory; that he would ſucceed all our public ſchemes and councils, ſo far as they are conſiſtent with equity, and the general good of mankind; that he would proſper the miniſtration of the everlaſting goſpel of his Son, and make his miniſters of all denominations faithful, laborious, and abundantly ſucceſsful; that he would preſerve and bleſs our only rightful ſovereign king GEORGE, eſtabliſh his heart in a humble conſcientious reverence of the *King of Kings*, and *Lord of Lords*, and *his throne in righteouſneſs*; that he would inſpire him with a zeal for religion, and a generous concern for the welfare of the people committed to his care; that he would give him the victory over all his, and the nation's, enemies, both at home and abroad; that he would ſupport him under all the cares

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and inquietudes, to which thrones are ſubject, and give him magnanimity and fortitude to bear up under all the calamities of human life, from which the greateſt princes are not exempted; that he would make his reign over us long, glorious, and eaſy to himſelf, and happy to all his ſubjects; and finally, that our religion, and our liberties, civil and ſacred, may, under the auſpicious care of his all-wiſe and ever-gracious providence, be tranſmitted down ſecure to lateſt generations.

FINIS.